

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 21, 2002 LB 898, 946

SENATOR CUDABACK: The committee amendments are not adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Wickersham would move to amend with AM3136. (Legislative Journal page 997.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Wickersham, you're open to...open to...you're recognized to open on AM3136.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. Now, I think I might be able to know where I'm at and be able to suggest to you where we should go, and, obviously, I think that we should adopt this amendment. Now, one of the...one of the things that you will hear about this amendment, I presume, is that it has not had a public hearing, and that's true. But I think that for all intents and purposes, this amendment has had a good public airing. And I expect it to get a little bit more of that today so I'm hoping that the airing will substitute for the hearing and that we will be able to go on our way without troubling ourselves too much about that formal part of our process. I can tell you that the amendment had a discussion in the Revenue Committee. We had an explanation of the amendment by the Tax Commissioner, and that the amendment is supported by many members of the Revenue Committee. The amendment that has had this public airing is a proposal by the Governor to cause the beneficiaries of the Economic Development Incentive Programs to share in a resolution of our budget problems. The Governor, I think, wisely recognized that if we are to get to a resolution of our fiscal problems, that it was appropriate to ask many beneficiaries of the state's tax and fiscal policies to contribute. And, quite frankly, this kind of a proposal was one of the reasons that I was willing to support LB 898. I'm willing to suggest to some of my constituents that, yes, we might have to raise property taxes, but I'm also going to be able to tell them that the business community that have been beneficiaries in a wide range of ways, and in very significant amounts of dollars, have also contributed, and that none of us are immune in this discussion from the hard decisions that we have to make. Now, I suppose that the decision to step up to the plate is never an easy one, and it is never one that we expect people to make voluntarily. I won't have anybody that tells me that I will voluntarily pay more property tax so that